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STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MEMORANDUM

To: All Heads of Fire Departments

From: Stephen D. Coan, State Fire Marshal

Date: May 1, 2013

Subject: The Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System – 2011 Annual Report

On our website you will find a copy of the *Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System – 2011 Annual Report*. This report is based upon the thousands of individual fire incident reports submitted by local fire departments throughout Massachusetts in 2011. This effort makes it possible to look at the total fire experience, to identify our fire problems, to develop strategies to address these issues and to measure their effectiveness. In 2011, 97.8% of Massachusetts fire departments participated in MFIRS.

The total number of fires fell to 29,110 in 2011, an 11% decrease from the previous year. Unfortunately 54 civilians died in 51 Massachusetts fires during 2011. Civilian deaths increased by 18, or 50%, from the record low 36 fire deaths in 2010. However, for the first time known, no one under the age of 18 died in a structure fire. A disturbing statistic is that 32% of all residential fire victims were not alerted by smoke detectors. These people mistakenly thought fire wouldn't happen to them.

Cooking caused 67%, of all residential fires and electrical fires were the leading cause of fire deaths in 2011, accounting for 14, or 34%, of the total residential fire deaths. Smoking has historically been the leading cause of fatal fires as far back as the 1940's and was the second leading cause of fire deaths in 2011 accounting for four, or 10%, of the deaths.

It is my hope that you will use this report to map out and measure fire prevention strategies in the coming year. We must sustain our efforts to protect the citizens of the Commonwealth through fire prevention and public education.

To access this report, please go to <http://www.mass.gov/dfs> and go to *Quick Links* then *MFIRS Annual Reports, County Profiles & Fact Sheets* to download a copy in pdf format or contact Derryl Dion of the Fire Data Unit in the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (978) 567-3382.